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1972/11/18

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 18, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have read with great attention the November 18 memorandum from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. I am sure you recognize the enormous difficulties posed to us by another set of extensive changes following the many proposed changes which we have already discussed. Nevertheless, I shall instruct Dr. Kissinger to seek to the maximum extent possible to incorporate your proposals. I must point out to you, however, first that the express references to North Vietnamese troops in the South have the disadvantage of legitimizing any forces that may remain and, secondly, as we have repeatedly pointed out are clearly unobtainable. Also, it is impossible at this point to change the composition of the International Control Group. As for the other changes, Dr. Kissinger will brief your Ambassador at the end of each day as to what progress is being made.

My instructions to Dr. Kissinger are to press to the maximum extent possible to incorporate your proposals. I must point out, however, that I am not prepared to scuttle the agreement or to go along with an accumulation of proposals which will have that practical consequence. It may therefore not be possible to get all the changes.

As for the proposal to send an emissary to Washington, I believe that after two visits by Dr. Kissinger and three by General Haig, three personal letters from me and numerous exchanges through Ambassador Bunker as well as my personal reading of all your communications, we have all of the suggestions that you have made fully in mind for this phase of the negotiations. I would therefore think that the best occasion for a meeting of your emissary with me would be immediately after the Paris phase when we have a new set of issues to consider jointly. I therefore suggest if you select Mr. Duc

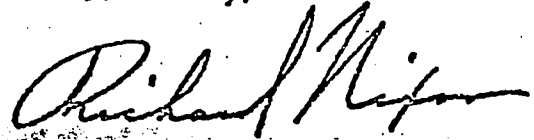
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as your emissary that he return to Washington on Dr. Kissinger's aircraft immediately upon the conclusion of the next Paris round. If, on the other hand, you prefer that Foreign Minister Lam serve as your emissary, I recommend that he proceed to Paris immediately and take part in the discussions which will follow each day's session and then return to Washington with Dr. Kissinger for a meeting with me.

I again urge you to join us in the course that I am determined to follow. I must once more impress upon you the enormous danger of losing public support in the United States with all the risks for continuing our joint effort. We will, of course, be in close touch after the completion of the negotiations in Paris.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon